United Nations S/PV.7743

Security Council

Seventy-first year

Provisional

7743rd meeting
Friday, 22 July 2016, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Bessho	(Japan)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Santa Rosa
	China	Mr. Shen Bo
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Malaysia	Mr. Ibrahim
	New Zealand	Mr. Van Bohemen
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Spain	Mr. Gasso Matoses
	Ukraine	Mr. Vitrenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Johnson
	United States of America	Mr. Pressman
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermúdez
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Suárez Moreno

Agenda

The situation in Libya

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Libya

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Libya to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome His Excellency Mr. Boris Johnson, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2016/635, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Angola, China, Egypt, France, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Russian Federation, Senegal, Spain, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

The President: The draft resolution received 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2298 (2016).

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

Mr. Johnson (United Kingdom): This is my first my visit to the United Nations as Foreign Secretary, and I am delighted that it has coincided with the unanimous adoption of resolution 2298 (2016), which marks an important step forward for international peace and security. I recognize that this excellent work goes on day in and day out, and I am delighted today to be part of it.

The resolution marks the beginning of the end of the Libyan chemical weapons programme. It grants the legal authorization necessary for the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to remove the chemical precursors of those weapons, so that they can be destroyed in a third country. In doing so, we have reduced the risk of those weapons falling into the hands of terrorists and fanatics.

I would like to thank Council members for their role in making the resolution possible. It is a sign of the strength of the international cooperation on Libya that we were able to come together so quickly to agree it. Together, we have shown our collective commitment to the people and the authorities of Libya and ultimately to all of us who want to live in a world free of chemical weapons. The United Kingdom is committed to making this world a reality, including through our permanent seat here in the Security Council.

What we have done today is a good example of the role of the United Nations in tackling global challenges. It is also an example of the United Kingdom's continued determination to play a leading role, through the United Nations, together with our partners in the Security Council.

Mr. Aboulatta (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation voted in favour of resolution 2298 (2016) because we are convinced of the need for the international community to come together to prevent non-State actors, and in particular terrorist groups like Da'esh, from acquiring weapons of mass destruction. Egypt, as a neighbour of Libya, insists on the importance of removing dangerous materials and preventing all terrorist organizations from acquiring them.

The unanimous vote in favour of resolution 2298 (2016), calling for the removal and destruction of chemical weapons in Libya, clearly reflects the strong determination of the international community to take the necessary measures in line with previous Security Council resolutions, including resolution 1540 (2004). Our endorsement and vote in favour of the resolution do not mean, however, that we are without important comments on its text, some of which I wish to share here.

First, the resolution does not mention the strategic framework of this initiative, namely, making the Middle East a zone free of nuclear weapons and all weapons of mass destruction, in line with resolution 687 (1991). The Middle East is a region that remains uncovered by any relevant treaties. Secondly, the resolution does not mention the major threat represented by Da'esh

and other terrorist organizations in Libya. Thirdly, resolution 2298 (2016) does not mention the time frame for the various measures and mechanisms that will be used by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and its member States in the transfer of the chemical materials. It is also unclear how necessary it was to adopt the resolution under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations in order to take into account the declarations made by the Libyan Government.

Finally, I note the lack of explicit steps taken to facilitate the adoption. Council members did not have sufficient time to consider the text, which they saw for the first time only 72 hours before it was put to the vote, which did not allow some members to discuss or add to parts of the text. My delegation is not convinced by the justifications that certain Council members made for the need for a quick adoption. The way in which the draft resolution was submitted runs contrary to the rules of transparency in the work of the Council and does not reflect the efficiency or cooperation desired in its work, which were mentioned at our meeting earlier this week (see S/PV.7740).

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We regard the adoption of resolution 2298 (2016), authorizing the transfer of chemical weapons stockpiles from Libya and their subsequent destruction as an important step in chemical demilitarization. Given the intensified presence of various terrorist groups in Libya, this step is a timely. There was an eminent danger of those chemical weapons falling into their hands.

The examples of Syria and Iraq have shown how acute the problem of chemical terrorism is for the region. Not enough is being done to combat the problem today, occasionally owing to artificially politicized reasons. However, the Russian Federation has always strongly advocated concrete initiatives enabling a collective response commensurate with the threat.

We believe that the containers of chemical weapons that have been transported to the coast must be removed from Libya as quickly as possible and safely destroyed. The Security Council will keep a close watch on that operation. We stress that the destruction of all Libyan stockpiles of chemical weapons must be carried out in strict compliance with the relevant procedures of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). That is especially important because it was recently shown that during the long-term storage of toxic substances, stockpiles shrank by 220 tons. This phenomenon must be explained and justified in a scientific manner within the framework of the ongoing OPCW investigations. Similar requirements should be applied to all States parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention. We must be absolutely sure that dangerous toxic substances do not fall into the hands of terrorists.

Mr. Pressman (United States of America): I would like to begin by thanking Foreign Secretary Johnson for his presence here today and for the United Kingdom's leadership on this issue.

The United States strongly endorses the authorization of Member States to assist in the transfer and destruction of Libya's Category 2 chemical weapons outside of Libya. We are pleased that the Security Council was able to respond to the initiative of the Libyan Government of National Accord, working with the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the international community, to facilitate the transfer and destruction of these chemicals.

It was imperative that we act quickly in this instance to remove these chemicals in order to prevent possible capture and use by non-State actors. As such, we appreciate the United Kingdom's approach as penholder in presenting a clean and simple authorization for immediate action to address a threat to international peace and security. These efforts will help ensure that the chemicals are safely and securely destroyed in a verifiable manner, and we are hopeful that all members of the Security Council recognize the importance of undertaking this action in an expedited manner.

We look forward to our continued work with the international community to ensure these Category 2 chemical weapons are safely destroyed.

Mr. Shen Bo (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China supports the complete destruction of Libya's remaining chemical weapons stockpiles. We hope that all parties will carefully implement resolution 2298 (2016) just adopted by the Security Council to ensure the elimination of Libya's chemical-weapon stockpiles in a safe and expeditious manner.

We support continued inclusive political dialogue among Libyan parties so as to resolve differences through negotiations. We support the constructive role of the United Nations, countries in the region and

organizations in the subregion in helping to restore peace and stability in Libya.

China has always been opposed to the use of chemical weapons by any State, organization or individual. We hope that the international community will take effective measures to prevent the use of chemicals as weapons by terrorist organizations and individuals, so as to safeguard peace and security in the region.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): France welcomes the adoption of resolution 2298 (2016), drafted by the Mission of the United Kingdom, which we thank. It was the culmination of work conducted in close cooperation with the Libyan authorities and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. It also represents an important step in guaranteeing the security of Libya and of the region, particularly with regard to the risk posed by non-State actors. More generally speaking, it is positive step forward for the non-proliferation-of-chemical-weapons regime.

The meeting rose at 3.25 p.m.